



February 23, 2015

Dear Families,

When I became Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), I promised the city I would do everything I could to improve opportunities for our young people. One way we are doing this is by implementing the Common Core State Standards. These standards raise the bar on student achievement and put all students on the pathway to success in college, career, and life.

For the past three years, our students' learning has been guided by the Common Core standards. In March, students will begin taking the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career, or PARCC, as it is more commonly known. The PARCC is aligned to the Common Core standards and will match what students are actually learning in school.

PARCC is a more advanced test than DC CAS. It will give students a better opportunity to show what they know in reading, writing, and math. The results will give you deeper insight into whether or not your child is on-track for success in college and career. The entire PARCC test will be taken on the computer. It will challenge students to think critically and provide written and interactive responses, like composing an essay or solving a multiple-step math problem. This will be a big change from the types of tests students are familiar with taking.

The chart below highlights the key differences between PARCC and DC CAS.

	DC CAS	PARCC
Grades tested	Grades 3-10	Grades 3-8 and students in Algebra I, Geometry, English I & II
Curriculum focus	Not based on Common Core State Standards	Based on Common Core State Standards
Purpose	Evaluated K-12 proficiency	Shows whether or not students are on-track for college and career
How test is administered	Paper and pencil	Online (computers)

PARCC is a valuable tool for supporting student success. However, it is only one of many factors that will define success toward our goals, a Capital Commitment. Every day, we are focused on providing students with rigorous academic instruction and engaging learning experiences to help them reach their full potential. Thank you for partnering with us in supporting our students as they rise to this new challenge.

Be sure to read the attached FAQ and visit the DCPS website (dcps.dc.gov/PARCC) to learn more about PARCC. If you have questions, please contact your child's teacher or email dcps.testing@dc.gov.

We are DCPS, and we can do this!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kaya Henderson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kaya Henderson
Chancellor